

The President's Radio Address*June 12, 1993*

Good morning. Last night the United Nations, acting with American and other coalition forces, successfully attacked the military positions in Somalia of the warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. Our forces, thankfully, have sustained no casualties.

The U.N.'s action was a response to a savage attack this past week by Aideed's forces carried out on U.N. peacekeepers. Aideed's attack killed 23 Pakistanis and injured 3 Americans serving in the U.N.'s force. It was a cold-blooded ambush on U.N. forces who were delivering food and building peace for the people of Somalia.

The United Nations and the United States refuse to tolerate this ruthless disregard for the will of the international community. Therefore, following a request from the U.N. and pursuant to a U.N. Security Council resolution, I ordered the participation of our troops in this action. I commend the decisive leadership of the U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, the commander of the U.N. force, Turkish General Bir, and United States Major General Thomas Montgomery.

With this action, the world community moves to restore order in Somalia's capital and to underscore its commitment to preserve the security of U.N. forces. For if U.N. peacekeepers are to be effective agents for peace and stability in Somalia and elsewhere, they must be capable of using force when necessary to defend themselves and accomplish their goals.

We need to recall why U.S. forces were in Somalia to begin with and how much has been accomplished since they first arrived. Last December the United States first sent troops to Somalia to help the United Nations answer a desperate call for help. By the time we arrived over 350,000 Somalis already had died in a bloody civil war, shrouding the nation in famine and disease. Over 30,000 American men and women, both military and civilian, joined with troops and relief workers from all over the world in an effort to end the starvation and the hopelessness. They worked with courage and dedication to quell the violence, rein in the warlords, and deliver tons of urgently needed food and medicine.

That humanitarian effort restored hope, advanced our interests, and represented the very best of America's ideals.

Today in Somalia, crops are growing, starvation has ended, refugees are beginning to return, schools and hospitals are reopening, a civil police force has been recreated, and Somalia has begun a process of national reconciliation with the goal of creating the institutions of democracy. As a result, over recent months, we have been able to reduce our troop presence in Somalia down to fewer than 4,000, a small fraction of the total U.N. force.

While American and U.N. efforts in Somalia have been successful, there remains a small but dangerous minority of Somalis who are determined to provoke terror and chaos. Last night's action was essential to send a clear message to the armed gangs, to protect the vast majority of Somalis who long for peace, to enhance the security of our forces still in Somalia, to hasten the day when they can safely return home, and to strengthen the effectiveness and the credibility of U.N. peacekeeping in Somalia and around the world.

The U.N.'s action holds an important lesson about how our Nation can accomplish our own security goals in this new era. Although the cold war is over, the world remains a dangerous place. The United States cannot be the world's policeman, but we also cannot turn a blind eye to the world's problems, for they affect our own security, our own interests, and our own ideals. The U.S. must continue to play its unique role of leadership in the world. But now we can increasingly express that leadership through multilateral means such as the United Nations, which spread the costs and expressed the unified will of the international community. That was one of the lessons of Desert Storm. And clearly, that was one of the lessons last night in Somalia.

On behalf of all Americans, I am proud of the American forces, who once again have demonstrated extraordinary courage and skill. The world thanks them and all of the U.N. forces in Somalia for their service, for striking a blow against lawlessness and killing, and for advancing the world's commitment to justice and security.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Thank you very much. Have a good day.
Thank you very much.

Remarks to Volunteers for Presidential Correspondence

June 12, 1993

Thank you. Good morning. I want to thank you all for coming here and for being willing to help us with what is really a great problem for democracy. But as all of you know, we get a lot of mail at the White House. What a lot of people don't know is we're getting a lot more than anyone ever has. And by the time we had been here 3½ months, more letters had come to the White House than came to the White House in all of 1992.

We're getting about 40,000 letters a day. We are desperately working to try to answer those letters with very limited staff. We've had already about 450 young people from the area agree to come in and help us in the past. But today I'm proud to say that there are over 800 young people who will be working today to help open and staple the mail that comes in here, so that then it can be read and sorted and answered.

We have gotten over 3 million pieces of mail, with more coming. And that's good. But we have to answer all those letters. We have to let the American people know that they are being heard, and we're working very hard on it. And I might say, that's after we opened an E-mail channel, so we've got a lot of people coming in through E-mail. We've got extra phone lines on for people to call in, and we're still getting this much mail.

So you are really going to help make democracy work today. And all over America, people will have their letters read and their letters answered more quickly because you've agreed to come here and help us open and staple the mail so it can all be processed more quickly.

I am personally very, very grateful to you for doing this. You've made a real contribution to helping the White House work for America better. I hope it's also a great fun day for you. And I'm delighted to see all of you here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:42 a.m. on West Executive Drive at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Flag Day Proclamation

June 14, 1993

Good morning. Welcome to the Rose Garden, and thank you for joining us for this observance of Flag Day. As we begin, I want to introduce three children, to my left, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance: Christopher Williams, an 8-year-old from Ketcham Elementary School; Delilah Johnson, who is also 8, from Ketcham Elementary School; and Sean Mizzer, 10 years old, from Watkins Elementary School. They are now going to lead us in the pledge.

[At this point, the students led the Pledge of Allegiance.]

Good job. Let's give them a hand. I thought they did well. Thank you. *[Applause]*

Thank you. Please be seated. I want to acknowledge the presence of a few of our guests in the audience today, including Mr. James Kenney, the national commander of AMVETS; Mr. Louis Koerber, the president of National Flag Day Foundation; Mr. George Cahill, the president of the National Flag Foundation; and Mrs. Romaine Thomas, who is the principal of Ketcham Elementary School, where two of these children attend school. Thank you all.

On this day in 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of our Nation. Throughout our history, this flag has been a potent symbol of America and what it means to be an American. You can hear America's reverence for the flag in our music from our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," written by Francis Scott Key in 1814, to George M. Cohan's "You're a Grand Old Flag," to John Philip Sousa's magnificent march "The Stars and Stripes Forever," performed best by his very own United States Marine Band.